

A SUMMARY
OF THE
FAITH AND PRACTICE,
WITH THE
ARTICLES OF THE COVENANT,
OF THE
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH,
IN THE
CITY OF NEW-YORK.

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH.

THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, in the City of New York, was founded in the year 1745. The members met together in private dwellings until 1753, when they hired a Sail Loft in *Cart and Horse street*, now William street, where they statedly assembled for public worship for several years. As their numbers and resources increased, they purchased ground in *Gold street*, and built upon it a small Meeting House, which was opened on the 14th of March, 1760. This house was removed, and a large stone building was erected upon the same site, in 1802. In the year 1841, this building was also taken down, and a large and commodious edifice for the use of the Church, together with offices for Bible and Missionary operations connected with the Baptist denomination, has been erected at the corner of Broome and Elizabeth streets; a representation of which may be seen on the cover.

The doctrines in the belief and profession of which this church was constituted, and which she still steadfastly maintains, are contained in our first book of Records, pages 3—6: but as our predecessors authenticate their views only by a reference to the Scriptures *as a whole*, we deem it expedient and proper to publish the SUMMARY of our FAITH, and ARTICLES of our CHURCH COVENANT; referring to *particular passages* in proof of our peculiar tenets.

SUMMARY

OF

FAITH AND PRACTICE.

1. WE receive the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as being ALL GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD; and as containing the only authorized RULE of our faith and practice.

2 Tim. iii: 16. 2 Pet. i: 21. Isa. xxxiv: 16. John v: 39. Acts xvii: 11. 1 Pet. iv: 11. Isa. viii: 20. Ps. cxix: 105. Prov. xiii: 13. John viii: 31.

2. According to these Holy Oracles, we believe that there is ONE, and but ONE LIVING AND TRUE GOD, who subsisteth in

THREE EQUAL PERSONS, the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY SPIRIT.

Deut. vi : 4. Mark xii : 29. Eph. iv : 6. 1 Tim. ii : 5. Exod. xx : 3—5. Gen. i : 26. Isa. xlviii : 16. Matt. xxviii : 19. 1 John v : 7. 2 Cor. xiii : 14. Heb. i : 3. Isa. ix : 6. John i : 1. Isa. xlvi : 9. John x : 30.

3. That God is clearly revealed, as to his BEING and PERFECTIONS, both by HIS WORKS and in HIS WORD ; yet, that with respect to his *Essence*, mode of *Existence*, and *manner of operation*, He is incomprehensible to all but himself.

Rom. i : 20. Ps. xix : 1—3. Job xi : 7—9. Isa. xl : 28. Isa. xlv : 15.

4. That God alone created the Heavens and the Earth, with all their inhabitants and appurtenances, whether visible or invisible.

Ps. xxxiii : 6—9. Gen. i : 1. Acts xvii : 24—26. Gen. ii : 1. Ps. viii : 3. Ps. civ : 24. John i : 3. Col. i : 16.

5. That God made man upright, and able to keep the Law under which he placed him ; but that man, being left to the freedom of his own will, transgressed that Law, and thereby fell into a state of moral depravity and legal condemnation.

Gen. i: 26. Eccl. vii: 29. Gen. i: 31. Ps. viii: 5. Gen. v: 1. Gen. iii: 7. Isa. i: 5. Ps. xiv: 3. John iii: 18. Rom. v: 12. 18. Isa. xliii: 27. Rom. i: 28—32.

6. That the first man, Adam, was constituted, by divine appointment, a public head and representative of all his posterity ; and consequently when he fell, they all fell with him into the same condition.

Rom. v: 14. 12. 19. 1 Cor. xv: 22. 48. 49. Gen. v: 3. Job xiv: 4.

7. That all mankind, *by nature*, are totally and universally depraved, and therefore without either ability or inclination to

return to God, or to render perfect obedience to his moral requirements.

Ps. liii: 3. Rom. iii: 9—20. Prov. xx: 9. Josh. xxiv: 19. Jer. xiii: 23. John v: 40. Jer. ii: 22. John vi: 44. 65. Eph. ii: 3.

8. That notwithstanding these deplorable facts, whereas Adam, by his own personal transgression, lost his ability to keep the Law under which he was made; and whereas the disability, as well as the disinclination of his posterity to keep this Law, *arises from their personal depravity*; it evidently follows, that their obligations to render a perfect obedience to all God's commandments, remain undiminished; and consequently that the penal curse threatened against every delinquent is strictly righteous.

Gen. iii: 16, 17. Job xxi: 14. Gen. vi: 5. Deut. vi: 5. Luke x: 25—28. Gal. iii: 10. James ii: 10. Rom. ii: 2—15.

9. We believe in the indispensable necessity of the ATONEMENT OF CHRIST,

and its special relationship to the sins of his people.

Luke xxiv: 26. Rom. viii: 3. Isa. liii: 10, 11. Lev. xvi: 30. Heb. ix: 22. Matt. i: 21. John x: 11. Heb. x: 10. 1 Pet. i: 18, 19. Luke i: 68. Rev. v: 9. Eph. i: 7. Rev. xiv: 4. Tit. ii: 14. Rev. vii: 14—17. Isa. li: 11. 1 Cor. i: 30. Gal. i: 4. 1 Cor. xv: 3.

10. That God, in pardoning and justifying any of the fallen race of mankind, has no respect to any supposed good works to be done by them, either before or after regeneration; but *alone to the obedience and sacrifice of Christ*, which God the Father, by an act of his mere grace, *imputes to all that believe*, as the only meritorious cause of their pardon and justification.

Ez. xxxvi: 31, 32. Luke xvii: 10. Rom. iii: 9—28. iv: 4—8. 16. 23—25. Eph. ii: 1—10. Isa. xliii: 25. Jer. xxxiii: 6. Rom. iv: 3—6. 23—25. v: 19—21. Acts xiii: 39. xviii: 27.

11. That no works performed by any, prior to their regeneration and faith in

Christ, are spiritually good ; yet morality and benevolence are to be enjoined on all, as required by the Law of God, and as useful in society, and that believers *especially* are to be *careful to maintain good works*, as the fruits and evidences of their gracious state ; as the means of their usefulness in the church and in the world ; and by which they *show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light.*

Rom. viii : 7, 8. Heb. xi : 6. Isa. i : 16, 17. Ez. ii : 3—5. Luke x : 27. Eph. ii : 10. Titus ii : 11—14. iii : 8. Philemon 5—7. Matt. vii : 16. Gal. vi : 10. Heb. xiii : 16. 1 Pet. ii : 9. Matt. v : 16.

12. That the *Gospel of the Grace of God*, revealing his method of saving lost sinners, through the incarnation, obedience, and death of Christ, is to be preached to mankind in common ; but that regeneration, and therefore *repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*, which are essential not only to salvation, but to the

enjoyment of peace with God, and to the performance of his acceptable service ; as also every requisite to secure perseverance in grace to glory, (*which is certain of all the regenerate ;*)—are sovereignly bestowed according to God's eternal and personal election of his people in Christ, through whom he gives his Holy Spirit to them, for their effectual calling, sanctification, and preservation unto eternal life.

Acts xx: 24. 2 Tim. i: 10. 2 Cor. iv: 6. Gen. iii: 15. Isa. vii: 14. Matt. i: 21. v: 17. 1 Peter iii: 18. Matt. xxviii: 19. Mark xvi: 15. Luke xxiv: 47. Col. i: 28. Acts xxi: 21. xxvi: 18. Rom. v: 1. Heb. xi: 6. Rom. viii: 8. 17. 30. John x: 27—29. Acts xiii: 48. Eph. i: 3, 4. 1. Thes. v: 9. 2 Tim. i: 9. Tit. iii: 5—7. Eph. iv: 30. Rom. viii: 11.

13. That although the *Holy Spirit* as to his testimony in the Scriptures and in the ministry of the word, is constantly *resisted* by the unregenerate, as he was by the Jews as to his testimony by the prophets and

apostles; yet that in his regenerating operations *He is always invincible and infallible.*

Acts vii: 51. Neh. ix: 30. Zech. vii: 11. Eph. ii: 1. 4, 5. Philip. i: 6. Rom. viii: 14. 2 Cor. iii: 17.

14. Moreover, in regard to the future state, we believe that according to the Scriptures there will be a personal resurrection *both of the just and unjust*; and that besides an *individual judgment* that passes upon every soul on its separation from the body, there will be a *general judgment*, when an eternal separation will be made between the righteous and the wicked;—the righteous being received to everlasting happiness, and the wicked being consigned to everlasting misery.

Dan. xii: 1—3. John v: 28, 29. Acts xxiv: 15. Luke xvi: 22, 23. xxiii: 43. Heb. ix: 27. Acts xvii: 31. Rom. xiv: 10. 2 Cor. v: 10. Rev. xx: 11—15. Matt. xxv: 31—46. 2 Thes. i: 6—10. 1 Cor. xv: 4. 16. 20. 49. Luke xxiii: 43.

15. Nor would we presume to form our views of the church and ordinances of Christ by any other light than that of the same inspired oracles: and judging by these infallible records, we believe that the *kingdom of Christ is not of this world*; that the gospel church, therefore, is neither national nor parochial; and that none belong to her by virtue of their natural descent from her members. A visible *Gospel Church* should consist of such persons only as make a credible profession of faith in Christ, receive his gospel and obey his precepts.

John xviii: 36. Isa. liv: 5. 13. Eph. v: 32. Isa. lix: 21. Acts ii: 47. 1 Cor. i: 1, 2. Col. i: 2. Col. iv: 15. Acts ix: 31.

16. We believe that every gospel church, regularly constituted, is a society *independent* of every other ecclesiastical body; having a scriptural authority and directory to govern itself: to choose and remove its

own officers, and to discipline its own members.

Matt. xviii: 15—17. Rom. xiv: 1. 1 Cor. v: 11—13. Acts vi: 3—5. 1 John iv: 1. Acts xiv: 23.

17. That the only *Officers* belonging to organized gospel churches, are *Pastors* or *Overseers*, and *Deacons*.

Philip. i: 1. 1 Tim. iii: 1—13. Acts xiv: 23. xx: 17. 28.

18. That the only symbolic ordinances appertaining to the gospel dispensation, are *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*: that nothing is a scriptural administration of baptism, but a total immersion of the subject in water, in the *Name of the Holy Trinity*, by a man duly authorized to administer gospel ordinances.. We also believe that subjection to Baptism is pre-requisite to admission into a visible church, and therefore, to partaking of the Lord's Supper; which is to be received

only by members of a visible church, and by them only *when come together* in a church capacity.

Matt. xxviii : 19, 20. Acts ii : 41, 42. Matt. xxvi : 26—28. 1 Cor. xi : 33, 34. Acts xx : 7.

19. We believe that the first day of the week is emphatically the LORD'S DAY ; and that it becometh us, laying aside ordinary labor and recreation, to hail every return of this day with Christian gladness, and to spend the hours of it in such devotional exercises, private, domestic, and public, as God may afford us opportunity and ability to perform ; excepting only such works of necessity and mercy as the events of Providence may dictate or require.

Heb. iv : 3. 9. Col. ii : 16, 17. John xx : 19—26. Rev. i : 10. Acts xx : 7. 1 Cor. xvi : 2.

20. We believe, moreover, that the singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, is divinely enjoined, and when religiously performed is well pleasing to God. And

though we are assured that none but the regenerate sing with the spirit and with the understanding, we nevertheless believe that mankind in common, as they are constantly receiving various mercies and blessings from God, are bound to celebrate his praise ; and, therefore, that they should be allowed and encouraged to join in this part of public worship.

Eph. v : 19. Col. iii : 16. Heb. xiii : 15, 16. 1
 Cor. xiv : 15. Ps. xxxiv : 1, 2. Ps. cvii : 8. 21. 31.
 Acts xvii : 24—29. Rom. i : 20. 21. Ps. cxlv : 4. 10.

CHURCH COVENANT.

ART. I. We agree to and adopt the preceding Summary, as a Compendium of our Faith and Practice; believing it to be in accordance with the doctrines and precepts of the Holy Scriptures.

ART. II. Besides observing private and family worship, We agree, "Not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together" for public worship on the Lord's day, and at such other seasons, whether stated or occasional, as the church from time to time shall appoint for this purpose. *Psalm lxxxvii: 2.*
Heb. x: 25.

ART. III. Believing it to be our duty, as a church of Christ to maintain the order and discipline which He hath appointed in His house, We agree to hold such meetings, stated and occasional, for transacting church-business, as our circumstances may require; and that, having appointed such meetings, we will be careful, Providence permitting, to attend them.

ART. IV. To preserve and promote peace and concord among us, with purity of faith and practice, We agree that it is our duty to pursue and support the following measures:—1. That in case of private or personal grievance, the member aggrieved, should observe the injunctions of our blessed Lord: *If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone, &c., &c.* *Matt. xviii : 15—17.* 2. That any member clearly proved before the church, to have been guilty of gross immorality, should, without further proceeding, be *put away.* *1. Cor. v : 11—13.* 3. That any member habitually neglecting the worship or communion of the church, should be called upon as a delinquent, that it may be known whether such person is an object of Christian sympathy, or of church censure. *Rom. xv : 1—6.* *Gal. v : 1—12.* 4. That any member known to have departed from “the faith of the gospel,” as held by the church—or, to have frequented any place of licentious

amusement, such as a theatre, a ball-room, or the like, should be rebuked and admonished ; and, if found perseveringly impenitent and incorrigible, such person should be *put away*, as evidently regardless of the peace and reputation of the church, and as a lover of erroneous doctrines and of sensual pleasures, and therefore, not a lover of God. *Rom.* xii : 1, 2. *1 Cor.* xi : 19. *Eph.* v : 11. *2 Tim.* iii : 4, 5. *Heb.* x : 23. 5. That members becoming disaffected toward each other touching “things pertaining to this life,” such as property or character, shall not be suffered to go to law before any worldly tribunal ; but shall be required mutually to submit their matters of controversy to the investigation and judgment of the church ; and, therefore, that any member or members refusing to comply with this apostolic direction, shall be censured by the church, and persisting therein, shall, after due forbearance and labour, be *put away*. *1 Cor.* vi : 1—10. 6. That persons *put away*, for whatever offence, great or

small, on giving to the church satisfactory evidence of repentance and reformation, shall be cordially restored to membership. *2 Cor.* ii: 6—11. *Gal.* vi: 1. Restoration to membership, however, does not include the restoration of a brother to any office that he may have held in the church before his exclusion. For, as no one is promoted to office by his original admission to membership, so, not by his re-admission after having been excluded. Men are to be chosen to office in the church from among its members. Out of the number of his disciples Christ set apart the *twelve* and the *seventy*. *Mark* iii: 13, 14. *Luke* x: 1. and out of the churches, *elders* and *deacons* were chosen. *Acts* xiv: 23. chap. vi: 3. and 1 *Tim.* iii: 8—13.

ART. v. As unanimity in church-acts is always desirable, We agree to use all scriptural means to promote it—such as due forbearance, meek expostulation, and affectionate persuasion; yet, when these fail of conciliating a minority, We agree,

that *ultimately* all questions regularly brought before us, shall be decided by a majority of the members present.

ART. VI. Finding no specified manner of receiving baptized persons into a visible church, either enjoined or exemplified in the New Testament, we believe that every particular church is at liberty to receive such persons in any decent and solemn manner which the church may prefer ; they having previously gained fellowship with them, by hearing a relation of their experience, and being credibly assured of their good moral character. Persons presenting LETTERS OF DISMISSION from sister churches of the same faith and order, may be received either on authority of such letters, or may be required to relate their experience, with an account of their doctrinal views, as the church, in each case shall judge prudent and expedient : and members of this church, in good standing, may be DISMISSED, at their own request, to unite with any other church of the same faith and order.

ART. VII. In our deportment toward each other—toward the members of sister churches—and toward the community at large, both civil and religious, We agree that we will endeavour, through grace, to maintain “a conversation becoming the gospel of Christ,” that *in all things God may be glorified in us*, and that his cause upon earth may be promoted through our instrumentality. *Philip. i: 27. 1 Pet. iii: and iv. chapters.*

ART. VIII. In supporting the gospel and aiding the poor among us—as also in defraying all other expenses necessarily arising from our organization as a church, We agree *conscientiously* to bear our several proportions, according to our circumstances; that *some may not be eased and others burdened*; *2 Cor. viii: 13*:—and inasmuch as the Lord Jesus commanded his disciples to preach the gospel to every creature, we acknowledge it to be our duty and privilege to pray fervently, to labor zealously, and to give cheerfully for the dissemination of

divine truth throughout the earth. *Isa. lx.*

1. *Matt. x : 7, 8. Mark xvi : 15.*

ART. IX. We agree that it is expedient that all persons who may hereafter propose to unite with us, should give their assent to this Summary of Faith and Practice, and the Articles of this Church Covenant, before their admission. And,

Finally : Sensible of our weakness and liability to err, and therefore of our continual dependence on the grace and guidance of the Holy Spirit, We agree, that it becometh us, with much prayer and self-denial, to walk together in all *humility* and *brotherly kindness*—to watch over each other *for good* and not *for evil*—to *stir up one another to love and to good works* ; and, when circumstances require it, to *warn* and *rebuke*, to *admonish* and *exhort* one another, according to the rules and precepts of the gospel ; all which, may God, for Christ's sake, enable us to do, *to the praise of the glory of his grace.* Amen.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES.

THE church having purchased ground in Gold street, and built a meeting house thereon, in 1760, continued for more than a quarter of a century to manage their own affairs ; and being *the owners of the property*, opened their house at pleasure.

An Act to provide for the Incorporation of Religious Societies, “to correct the illiberal and partial distribution of Charters ; to remove every lett or impediment to the growth and prosperity of the people ; and to enable every religious denomination to provide for the decent and honorable support of divine worship, agreeable to the dictates of conscience and judgment ;” was passed April 6th, 1784. This Act is declared to be in accordance with the 38th Article of the Constitution of the State of New York, which ordains “the free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference.” The following provision is found in the *eleventh Section of the Act*, viz :

§ XI. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that nothing herein contained shall be so construed, adjudged, or taken, to abridge or affect the rights of conscience or private judgment, or in the least to alter or change the Religious Constitutions or

governments either of the said *Churches*, Congregations, or Societies, so far as respects, or in any wise concerns, the DOCTRINE, DISCIPLINE, OR WORSHIP thereof.

After mature deliberation, and believing that the *rights, doctrine, and discipline* of the church, as expressed in the Confession of Faith, could not be injuriously affected thereby; the First Baptist Church, N. Y. City, acquiesced in the election of a BOARD OF TRUSTEES, and at a church meeting held on Tuesday the 27th of December, 1785, passed the following Resolution, viz :

Resolved, That in future, and until further orders of the church, all the monies arising from the rents of the pews, from and after the first of November last, be paid by the Collector, into the hands of the Trustees, to be by them paid to the Rev. John Gano, in addition to the common collections, the better to enable him to support himself and family.

Ordered, That the Clerk serve the said Trustees with a copy of the above Resolution.

The sentiment of the church as to *her own rights*, and the *duties* of Trustees as *Stewards* to manage her property *for the benefit of the church*, is here clearly set forth.

At a monthly church meeting, held Monday evening, Nov. 25th, 1850, the following Resolution was passed, viz :

Resolved, That no person shall be eligible to the

office of Trustee of the First Baptist Church, New York City, unless he be a member of said church, in good standing and full fellowship.

S. PIER, *Ch. Clerk.*

In accordance with the above resolution the vacancies were filled at a regular election, June 2d, 1851, and the present BOARD OF TRUSTEES is composed of the following brethren, all members of the church in good standing and full fellowship.

First Class—Eli Kelley, J. Doremus Mills, Thomas Thomas, Architect. Term expires 1854.

Second Class—Wm. Hillman, Sylvester Pier, Ezra P. Davis. Term expires 1853.

Third Class—John Cameron, Jeremiah B. Taylor, Richard B. Lewis. Term expires 1852.

ELI KELLEY, *Chairman.*

SYLVESTER PIER, *Treasurer.*

J. DOREMUS MILLS, *Secretary.*

At a monthly church meeting, held June 30th, 1851, the following notice was received from the Board of Trustees, viz :

I am instructed to notify the church, that the new Board of Trustees are fully organized, and that the Board are prepared to coöperate with the church in any course of action that may tend to the prosperity and happiness of both bodies.

By order of the Board,

J. DOREMUS MILLS, *Sec'y.*

